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AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT
IN WORLD DEMOCRATIC
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*Address to the 45th Session of the General
Assembly of the UNO*

(September 28, 1990)

THE INSTITUTE OF MARXIST-LENINIST STUDIES
AT THE CC OF THE PLA



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RAMIZ ALIA

Mr. President,

It is a special pleasure for me to take the floor and speak before this Session of the General Assembly, which also marks the 45th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Likewise, it is an honour for me to warmly congratulate you upon your election to the high post of the President of the UN General Assembly, and wish you success in fulfilling this noble task.

We have come to this important meeting with the desire to contribute, within our possibilities, to the strengthening of the spirit of international co-operation, and the safeguarding of peace and security for all countries and peoples, big or small.

The year which has elapsed since the meeting of the previous General Assembly was replete with events which at

times have been hopeful and at times threatening. However, they have resulted in the hope that at last, on the eve of 21st century, reason, not force, is leading mankind to the solution of conflicts, to co-operation and not to confrontation, to understanding and not to distrust.

It is very encouraging that, despite many difficulties, the concept is affirming itself that the security of the peoples and nations can be real and permanent only if a general security is established for all, just as political détente can have a solid basis only if the gap of unequal economic development among various countries is narrowed down, and if the poorer countries are assisted to embark on the road of modern development and the utilisation of the material and spiritual values of our time.

Certainly, various political, ideological, economic and social conflicts have not ceased seething, nor have the causes and factors which have given rise to them been eliminated. Nevertheless, the important thing is that a general consensus is being created that international problems cannot be solved, nor can threats and dangers to peace and general security be eliminated through old concepts and methods.

We would like to consider the process of the easing of tension, if it is crystallized and further affirmed with the active participation of the whole international community, not only a major achievement, but also a fundamental positive change in the building of new international relations.

In our view, what is happening in Europe and has taken the name of the process of security and co-operation in Europe is going along in that direction. Europe, the situation on this continent, and relations among its nations and peoples have been, at least up to this day, the source of the majority of positive or negative developments in the world.

The hotbeds of the major conflicts which then set the whole world afire had their source here, just as the origins of major political, ideological and cultural currents which have predominated over the centuries. From the great European wars, with all their suffering and superhuman sacrifices, the reflection of all European tragedies, illusions and disillusion, bold and noble initiatives have emerged so that the peoples and nations of Europe may live in peace and friendship among themselves.

Mine is a small country. The Alba-

nian people, however, are among the most ancient inhabitants of the European continent. During the thousands of years of their existence, they have never attacked anybody, never provoked any aggressive war, never threatened or encroached upon the security of their neighbours. On the contrary, they have gone through fire and flames to preserve their existence and assist others. George Kastrioti-Skanderbeg, our National Hero of the 15th century, has been and remains the symbol of the brilliant fighter for the defence, not only of his own people, but also the first champion of European humanism and civilisation.

History has not caressed the Albanian people, either in ancient or in modern times. But it has also taught them that, for their freedom, independence, national sovereignty, originality and identity to be protected, they must boldly fight and oppose any attempt at their infringement, just as it has taught them to support and back up all international actions and initiatives that contribute to the strengthening of peace and general security.

We have proceeded from this necessity, this reality and this aim when we have opposed the policies of military

blocs and divisions into spheres of influence, closed markets and neo-colonialist policies, the armaments race and, in general, the policies of interference, arbitrariness and dictate.

We have been and continue to be for the democratisation of international relations so that the voice of all countries is listened to and reckoned with. It is true that the great powers have special responsibilities for the maintenance and strengthening of peace. This, however, does not give them the right to dictate and impose peace according to their particular interests and political and ideological criteria. The norms of international relations, the position of states in their relations to one another, and the maintenance of peace must be the fruit of the thought, experience and contribution of the whole international community and the consensus of all the peoples.

In this context, we cannot fail to evaluate and consider as promising the changes that have taken place in the relations between the United States of America and the Soviet Union, the agreements they have concluded on disarmament and, in general, the way they consider mutual and general security. If détente between the two superpowers were to

become global and extended to other fields, apart from that of armaments, this would be to the benefit of everybody.

Nevertheless, in the situation we find ourselves now, we cannot say that the policies and practices produced by the bloc concepts have been overcome. Worse still, the arrogance inspired by the policy of strength, which is reflected in the continuation of attempts at imposing various models, standards and schemes of political or social developments on others has not been overcome, either. Life has shown that pressure to make them compulsory for every country has led to conflicts from which the world is suffering to this day.

Mr. President,

Albania has followed with keen attention and hailed without hesitation the democratic processes that are developing in Europe today. We consider the process of the CSCE, which our country has already joined by participating in a number of its activities, as being of particular importance, and this not only for Europe.

The Albanian people have at all times and in all epochs shared the fate of the peoples of this continent. Precisely for this reason Albania feels itself an active participant in the processes that are unfolding in Europe. It looks forward with interest to the Paris Summit which, proceeding from the basic Helsinki Acts and other CSCE documents, will decide its institutionalisation.

Albania, which would like to be a full participant in the Paris Summit, will work in the spirit of the obligations deriving from it. All the efforts, initiatives or ideas which are aimed at liquidating the division of Europe into blocs and spheres of influence or other forms inherited from the past, while respecting the freedom, independence and sovereignty of every people and country, have the unreserved support of our country. Any proposal for and step towards the easing of tension, the strengthening of peace through dialogue and understanding, in complete equity and mutual respect, and any decision or suggestion contributing to the defense of human rights and national and democratic freedoms will also have our full support.

The changes that are taking place at present in Central and Eastern Europe,

the complex and still undefined situations that are being created in this wide region, and the new and varied differences that are emerging, of which one does not know what forms they will assume and what consequences they will bring about, call for serious and wise reflection and actions on the part of all and everybody. Exaltation of democracy and human rights alone cannot be the magic key to the solution of the major, indeed we would say, dramatic problems of those countries. It is an evident fact that in some countries this exaltation is leading to anarchy, decline and degradation of political, social and economic life, and conflicts and clashes with characteristics of a civil war.

Just as the whole world, so the European countries, too, stand at different levels of economic, social and other fields of development, which are the result of their different historical roads of development and which, all taken together have also determined and conditioned the way of their political life.

It would be desirable for all the European countries to be at the same economic, political, cultural level, etc. However, in our opinion, this level cannot be attained, and contradictions and conflicts

cannot be eliminated only by giving advice, no matter how wise it may be.

Life has shown that without the development of all countries in the economic field, without fruitful co-operation which creates possibilities of advance for others, too, and without establishing sincere and equal relations among states, which exclude prejudices and interference in internal affairs of any kind, no genuine security can be achieved, nor can democratic progressive and permanent community of the European peoples be created in that way.

Changes in Europe led also to the reunification of Germany, which eliminated one of the acute problems that have dominated the European political stage over the last 45 years. The right of the German nation to be reunited is a right that cannot be denied. The solution of such problems as that of the unification of Germany on the peaceful road is a good example also for coping with other problems of this kind which history has left for us to solve. They also greatly contribute to the democratisation of international relations, the strengthening of peace and security, and the creation of conditions for sincere and constructive co-operation among the peoples.

Albania wishes sincerely that united Germany, which represents a great economic and political power, will constitute a factor of peace and stability in Europe and further afield and serve the creation of a better future for our old continent.

In the context of the process of European co-operation and security, regional co-operation is also assuming particular importance. Such is also the process of Balkan co-operation, to which Albania attaches special importance and exerts all her efforts to make the maximum contribution to its advancement and success. We think and are fully convinced that this process contributes not only to the strengthening of security and co-operation in this very sensitive region, but also directly serves the cause of peace and stability in Europe and the Mediterranean.

However, the Balkans has also its specific problems, which have caused its lagging behind in many respects and hamper its joining in the European currents and becoming an integrating factor of our continent.

The fundamental problem, or rather say, the source of all conflicts, squabbles and hatred among the Balkan states

during this century, has been that of national minorities. It is high time, and the democratic processes taking place in Europe and the whole world call for it, that the Balkan countries tackle this problem with wisdom, realism and objectiveness. However complicated and difficult it might appear, if they set themselves the aim of transforming the minorities from an apple of discord into a bridge for communication and co-operation, then the ways and means to settle this problem can be found.

As far as Albania is concerned, it has the good will and is ready to make its contribution to the advancement of Balkan co-operation on a democratic road so that it serves the vital interests of the peoples of this peninsula.

One of the more acute and more disquieting problems in the Balkans today is that of the Albanians in Yugoslavia, towards whom the Government of Serbia is pursuing an open policy of genocide, something which has been affirmed also at many international forums and brought to the knowledge of world opinion.

In Kosova and other regions in Yugoslavia where Albanians live, such crimes are being committed that would have been monstrous in the dark Middle Ages.

The main point is not merely that the Albanians are not recognised only the standard human rights. It is already known by all that they are violated in the most barbaric way. The basic thing is that the Albanians are denied their right to exist, their right to live. The illegal dissolution of the Assembly of Kosova by Serbia, the occupation of the Radio and Television centre, the banning of the Albanian press, the dismissal of thousands of Albanians and their replacement by Serbs, are clear expressions of the intentions of the Serbian official authorities to solve the problem of the Albanians through violence and terror and not through dialogue.

The international community cannot and should not be indifferent towards this situation. The more so Europe which, having drawn up the map of the Balkans at the outset of this century, has not only the moral but also the historical responsibility for the martyrdom of Albanians in Yugoslavia.

The Albanians in Yugoslavia, who represent the oldest autochthonous population among all the peoples of this state and who occupy third place in population number among the nations which make up Yugoslavia, who for centuries

have been living on their soil and on a compact territory, are demanding no more rights than the Serbs, the Slovenians, the Croats or the Macedonians have. However, they will not accept anything less. They want to be equal subjects with all the other nations Yugoslavia is composed of.

The Albanians are demanding recognition of their right to self-determination. They want to live in a Yugoslav federation or confederation if the other nations stand for these forms of government.

The right to self-determination of nations is one of the greatest rights mankind has won, that is why it is sanctioned in the UN Charter and has actually been transformed into one of the basic principles of the democratic processes which are taking place in Europe and the world.

As far as Albania is concerned, it is for relations of good neighbourliness with Yugoslavia, for a broader and all-round co-operation with it. We will strive in this direction in the future, too, and wish that reason and wisdom prevail in the settlement of the Kosova problem, so that Serbia does not turn it into a conflict that would pose a threat to peace

and security not only in Yugoslavia but also in the Balkans and beyond.

The Albanian people have always sincerely wished to live in friendship with all the neighbouring peoples. Albania's good relations with Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy, as well as with other countries, and the closest possible co-operation on the basis of mutual respect and benefit, constitutes one of the fundamental strategic directions of our foreign policy.

Mr. President,

In this marked anniversary of the founding of the United Nations Organisation, along with our best wishes for its strengthening and advancement, Albania would like to reiterate its commitment to the UN and its Charter, and its support for the activities it carries on to the benefit of peace, security and international co-operation.

Our respect for and appraisal of the UN Charter stems from the fact that it carries a democratic ideal about regulating international relations, an ideal that reflects the tragic experience of the devastating wars which swept over Europe

and the whole world in the course of this century, and in particular, the struggle of the peoples, the Albanian people included, against fascism.

The UN Charter and its correct implementation, we hold, is the best instrument to protect and harmonise the interests of sovereign states and peoples, and the whole world community. If we are going to abide by this Charter, the different conflicts flaring up could be settled in a peaceful way and to the benefit of the sides concerned, as well as to the benefit of general peace and security.

We maintain that the significance of the United Nations is further enhanced at the present time when many problems, like disarmament, protection of the environment, war against drug trafficking, backwardness in economic development of many countries, protection of children, development of education, science and technology, have been turned into global issues which can hardly be settled with the individual efforts of one state or group of states; they can be settled only with the contribution of all the international community. The United Nations can do much in these directions. It represents the most suitable place

where ideas can and should be thrashed out, initiatives taken, etc.

The UN has rightly devoted particular attention to economic problems, assistance to revive the economy of poor countries, encouragement of their progress, easing their debt burden — a consequence of neo-colonialist expansion and the armaments race. We hail the initiatives that have been taken in these directions, such as the North-South dialogue, etc., while maintaining that the big industrialised countries, which enriched themselves also with the sweat and toil of the peoples of Africa, Latin America, Asia, have many obligations towards them.

The steps that have already been taken towards easing of tension and solving many regional conflicts, as well as the efforts that are being made to settle many international issues preoccupying the world have created an atmosphere which gives rise to hope for the whole mankind. However, events like Iraq's aggression on Kuwait spoil this atmosphere and raise obstacles to this positive process.

Albania has condemned the Iraqi aggression on and annexation of Ku-

wait. It has demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Iraqi troops from Kuwait and respect of the freedom and national independence of this sovereign and peaceful state. Were it not condemned, Iraq's aggression would constitute a dangerous precedent.

Iraq should observe the UN resolutions and the well-wishing and constructive suggestions of the Arab states and put an end to its adventure. Withdrawal from Kuwait would be to the benefit not only of Iraq itself, but the whole Arab cause, which it claims to defend and support.

The international community has adopted a correct stand towards the Iraqi aggression. These events should not, however, become an excuse for leaving aside the Palestinian problem, the right of Palestinians to have their own Homeland and state. The international community should not forget this right, the fulfillment of which is the key to the settlement of Middle East conflicts. Current events in the Middle East, unfavourable as they are, should serve as an encouragement in this direction.

Mr. President,

The Albanian people are working resolutely to build a better life for themselves. The path they chose by their free will and desire, brought them freedom and national independence and extricated them, within four decades, from backwardness to modern life. The transformations that have taken place in Albania are in sharp contrast, like day to night, with the past. This is not a figure of speech, but a reality for everyone to see.

This big advance called for sacrifices and imposed on us many privations in many directions. The more so when one bears in mind that our development was carried out in fierce struggle against the backwardness inherited from the past, as well as against interference by external forces. Hardly has any other country suffered more than Albania from the cold war. Anger, pressure, threats and blockades, at times from the East and at other times from the West, have swept, almost constantly, this tiny country on the shores of the Adriatic. And we do feel their consequences to this day, just as not infrequently we feel their revival.

Our country has actually embarked on a new stage of its development. We have to utilise with greater efficiency the material resources our country is rich in. This requires up-to-date technology, knowledgeable and emancipated people, it calls for the promotion of creative initiative and the extension of co-operation with other countries. Our people are working in all these directions.

What we call deepening of democracy through the enhancement of the role of masses represents a broad process of changes and transformation that is embracing all sectors — the economy, politics, social relations within the country and foreign relations, etc. We do not follow this policy either because it is in vogue, because someone is imposing it on us, or proceeding from tactical motives. It is a necessity of development and meets the needs of the country. That is why it is understood and well received by our people. It represents a fundamental component of our socialist ideal about the building of a fair and democratic society in which every citizen lives on his own sweat and toil, free and respected, on the basis of his contribution to the development and progress of his country.

Mr. President,

Wishing the proceedings of this Session of the United Nations General Assembly most fruitful work to the benefit of peace, I would like to assure you that my country will not spare its endeavours for the attainment of this lofty aim.

Thank you.